



Don Fotheringham

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**G. Vance Smith
2 Systems Drive
Appleton, WI 54914
Ph. 920-733-5000**

March 22, 2006

To Members of The Council of The John Birch Society (Copies to: JBS Building Contributors, JBS Field Staff)

Dear Gentlemen,

Because of the recent exchange of letters between Art Thompson and Wayne Rickert, I am sending this letter to those who have received that correspondence.

Please, take the time to read this letter and to study the enclosures (available upon request). Try, with me, to understand Art's motives in first attacking Jack and then later undermining me and eventually the Executive Committee. It should be very helpful to all genuinely interested in understanding what has been going on, and why.

There is so very much at stake. I will present to you material that in the past only the Executive Committee, the JBS Board of Directors, and a few in leadership of the Society ever needed to know. It was my hope that there would never be a need for this material to be distributed, but, if the Society is to be saved, the time has come.

Art's Sudden About-face

On March 8, 2006, I received a phone call from Rusty Barlow, a longtime member of The John Birch Society in Idaho. Rusty said he had just returned from a meeting with Art Thompson and Tom Rice. During the visit, Rusty asked Art plainly:

Art, do you feel comfortable with the statements Jack McManus has made about the Jews? Art Thompson replied:

I don't have any problems at all with what Jack said. Vance Smith has taken Jack's words out of context to make Jack appear to be anti-Semitic. He has taken video presentations by Jack and linked small clips, again out of context, and threatened to use the video against Jack and the Society.

Appleton "Inmates"

► [Tom Gow Rebuts Takeover Team's Spin on Coup](#)

► [Paradigm UnShift Still Needed](#)

► [Tom Gow Calls for a Paradigm "UnShift" at JBS](#)

► [Wayne, Walt, Keith Pledge to Continue Fighting the Insiders, With or Without JBS](#)

► [Thompson Can't Take the Heat, Distorts the Record](#)

► [JBS Veteran Mike Casey Asks Jack McManus to Do the Right Thing](#)

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This reflects an interesting change in Art's thinking about Jack. During the past six years, Art has continually expressed serious concern over what Art has referred to as Jack's anti-Semitic dialog. In fact, it was Art Thompson who first brought the matter to my attention.

In the late spring of 2000, Art Thompson approached me with information he had received concerning Jack's speaking activities to non-Birch religious groups. Because Jack had already sent copies of his speeches, tapes, and videos to selected JBS members (Joe Maurer having been one of them), Art was certain that Jack's material was now being broadcast far and wide. Art expressed great concern that, if not checked, Jack would surely destroy the Society. Art then arranged for me to receive a number of videos, brochures, and related material that would prove his case.

Later, on October 22, 2000, Art sent me a [faxed memo](#) from his home in Washington wherein he outlined various strategies that could be used to deal with Jack. In that memo, discussed in more detail below, Art even proposed that we get Jack to retire because of Jack's expressed views on Jews and Masons.

Despite his grave concerns about Jack's activities, Art would later hypocritically change his position on Jack. Why? The reason seems obvious: Jack, as a key member of the Board of Incorporators, was essential to Art's aspirations to be CEO. In an effort to appeal to Jack's over-sized ego, Art must have let Jack know that he would once again enjoy the title of President if he used his position as an Incorporator to have Vance removed.

Jack's Version

Jack McManus, now on the spot, has responded to questions from members about his speeches to religious gatherings with a story similar to Art's latest denials. In a January letter to a member, rather than providing the member with the requested copy of Jack's speech, Jack attempted to dismiss the whole episode in part with these words, In the talk, I made passing reference to many viewpoints that had always been held by the Catholic Church, one of which is that adherence to Judaism is deadly as far as eternal salvation is concerned. This, of course, is a view shared by Christians of numerous other denominations. But it is not a position ever taken by The John Birch Society which is not a religious organization.

In other words, Jack is now suggesting that he has done nothing wrong at all. At a religious conference, he merely repeated a commonly held religious viewpoint, not necessarily even advocating it as his own. So we might ask, what rational Birchers could object if that's all they were told?

Time for the Truth

There's an old saying, If you don't quit lying about me, I'm going

► [Tom Gow Responds to Report in August JBS Bulletin](#)

► [Rickert Confronts Eisenberg \(cont'd\)](#)

► [Wayne Rickert Refutes David Eisenberg](#)

► [Rusty Barlow & G. Vance Smith confront John F. McManus](#)

► [RWU Appeal Letter Sets Record Straight about JBS](#)

► [Concerned Members Speak Out](#)

► [My Initial Message](#)

► [My Second Appeal to John Fall](#)

► [G. Vance Smith Ltr 3-21-06](#)

► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Art Thompson's and Other JBS Leaders' Concerns About John McManus](#)

► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Bryan Turner on Art Crino's coup involvement since April 2005](#)

► [Wayne Rickert Exposes Art Thompson](#)

► [Art Thompson Goes After John McManus](#)

to start telling the truth about you. In the face of convincing, but misleading denials from Jack and Art, it is time to tell the whole, incontrovertible truth. For I believe, as I wrote you earlier, that this issue demands your immediate attention. What I am going to describe is documented in several letters, documents, audio and videotapes, but I will enclose with this letter only a few items. All of them, however, are available to you upon request.

Before we go there, however, let's try to understand just what it was that John F. McManus had been accused of, what the former JBS leadership team had done to deal with their concerns about the matter, and whether the situation constituted a serious concern relative to the future of the Society.

David Eisenberg Speaks

Jack is also circulating a letter written by David Eisenberg to Walt Ruckel. In it, David shows his forgiving nature by stating:

Some incorrect accusations have been made concerning the apparent anti-Semitism of John McManus. Please be assured that, as a Jew, I have a long time ago satisfied myself that statements made by John have been mis-interpreted by some folks who wish to lay the claim of anti-Semitism on John's head. I have had considerable correspondence with John on this subject, and find the claims to be without merit. In fact, John did revise that one speech to my satisfaction, and we have remained very good friends mutually dedicated to The John Birch Society and the task before us.

Two main points in David's letter:

1. Yes, David was correct when he stated there are some folks who wish to lay the claim of anti-Semitism on John's head. And, in fact, David Eisenberg was the first to do so when he stated in his postscript to his July 19, 2000 letter to Jack: How can we say that JBS is not anti-Semitic when the president speaks thus?

2. David also remarked, In fact, John did revise that one speech to my satisfaction. Well, even for friendship's sake, getting Jack to revise that one speech does not alter the fact that Jack wrote, spoke, and videotaped those statements that have been distributed by Jack and his friends at these conferences. Moreover, getting caught and being forced to change one's words in one speech, does not mean Jack's beliefs or proclivities have changed in the least.

On July 27, 2000, David wrote to me, and, as you can see, his opinions were very different. Below are some of his thoughts:

► [My Reply to John Fall's 3/06 Ltr](#)

► [My Reply to JBS Staff Reaction](#)

► [My Comments on Specific Claims to JBS Staff Reaction](#)

► [JBS Staff Reacts to this Website](#)

► [G. Vance Smith Ltr to the JBS Council](#)

► [Tom Gow Memo Regarding JBS Building Restrictive Covenant](#)

► [Additional Supporting Documentation](#)

Mr. McManus says in his letter of July 25th, I hope that no harm comes to the Society because of my ill-considered outburst. I suspect that the speech was put down on paper and used by the speaker at the March 24th engagement. If this is true, then, the ill-considered outburst was a planned event. This bothers me, since the implication is that those words represent true feelings with respect to Jews and the Catholic Church as viewed by Mr. McManus.

Hoping that no damage has been done to the Society doesn't solve the problem which has been created. While I don't know for sure, I do suspect that damage has been done, and the results not yet realized. We are responsible for our acts (unless our name is Clinton). Mr. McManus is responsible for any damage coming as a result of this unfortunate speech.

But, this outburst projected from his being, to a gathering of his co-religionists, causes me to feel that irrational anti-Jewish thoughts are a part of the man when he addresses attacks against the Catholic Church. None of which is a part of The John Birch Society.

What makes this most difficult to accept, is the fact that he is the President of The John Birch Society, and no matter where he may speak, he is recognized as a spokesman for the Society. In this position, he has no personal statements to make, even if he would first set up some disclaimer.

The letter of July 25th contains no assurance that this ill-considered outburst won't happen again.

In another letter to Jack dated August 18, 2000, David continues to try and settle his feelings toward Jack. I quote:

You refer to the ill-considered outburst. Jack, you composed your speech with those words of associating Jews with Masons. I don't feel that this was an outburst, but rather a prepared part of your speech. Was it ill-considered because of your position with The John Birch Society, or was it ill-considered with respect to Jews? My feeling is that you claim ill-considered reflecting your position with the Society. This leaves me to think that your, sometimes irrational, defense of the Catholic Church, is no different from the manner in which the Anti-defamation League (ADL) defends Judaism; in a manner less than true.

However, I cannot understand the outburst unless there is some very real anti-semitism within your character.

If harm comes to the Society as a result of your ill-considered comments, I shall be very unhappy. I have had to explain to all too many of my co-religionists for too many years, that JBS is not a danger to us, but rather a defense against our assured destruction. You, in this speech, have harmed my credibility. If there has been mass distribution

of this speech, I would be afraid of the results.

Unfortunately, there was more than this one speech there were several. Even Art Thompson points out in his [memo](#) ([which](#) I will describe in more detail later) that Jack McManus had been giving talks such as these for at least a decade. The most damage done by Jack was in his speeches, Know Thine Enemy, delivered at the Saint Joseph Forum, and Conspiracy Against the Catholic Church, delivered at the Saint Benedict Center. And there may have been other venues unknown to us where Jack presented his speeches and combined his *ostensible* Church views with his Birch views.

Regardless of whether Jack is truly anti-Semitic in his heart, he has an uncontrollable, irresponsible ego and has often had to be restrained from speaking before groups with whom The John Birch Society would not want to be associated. The danger to the Society is the same in any event.

When Tom Gow, Jack, and I were given our positions to preside over the Society in June 1991, The Executive Committee counseled Jack about his ego and cautioned him to carefully weigh his words. Some of Jack's words in the past, thoughtlessly expressed, had offended La Rita Quinn (organizer of the very successful Colorado Rocky Mountain Rally) and others and had caused the Society embarrassment. Even though Tom Hill had cautioned us to never make Jack president, the Executive Committee decided to take the risk. While Clyde Lewis, Joe Grinnan, Phil Binzel, Wayne Rickert and Walt Ruckel wanted to give Jack the leadership opportunity, they were also aware of his tendency to speak out of school. Unfortunately, Jack let them down.

Jack Wouldn't Stop

Moving on, dozens if not hundreds of hours went into trying to work through all this with Jack. Tom Gow invested more time than any of us in corresponding and sending lengthy memos to Jack in an effort to reason with him. And finally, because we were still disappointed in Jack's unwillingness to take responsibility for his actions, we put in file a lengthy letter to Jack reprimanding him in the matter. That letter of July 31, 2000 was signed by Tom Gow and me, and it was accompanied by a letter signed by JBS board members, Gary Benoit and Jim Toft, attesting to their concerns.

We were in hopes that this was all finally settled and behind us. But the matter didn't stay resolved very long. Much to our consternation, in the spring of 2002, Jack once again allowed himself to be put on the agenda as a speaker at the St. Benedict Center where several of his previous speeches had been videotaped.

When this was brought to my attention and I believe once more by Art Thompson I met with Jack and confronted him. He apologized for breaking the trust, but assured me that he had reviewed the program and was certain this time that no speeches would be given on the topic

of the Jewish conspiracy. Nevertheless, as Jack had already recognized the need to distance himself from this group knowing full well the guilt-by-association consequences, I asked him to cancel his appearance. He said that would cause him to lose face and would be too difficult for him to do, so we decided on a business trip out of the country (to Canada) to provide him with a respectable excuse.

Nevertheless, that was the last straw. I sent off a letter dated July 3, 2002 to Jack. The Executive Committee, which included two traditional Catholics, Joe Grinnan and Dr. Phil Binzel one of Jack's staunchest defenders along with Executive Committee members Rickert, Ruckel, and Van Buskirk, and JBS officers, agreed that Jack could not be reined in and that action must be taken. It was decided that we had no choice other than to quietly move Jack to the backburner and to eventually remove his title as president of the Society. That, of course, finally happened in October of 2003.

Now, there are those who are saying, So, Jack made a little mistake. He fixed all that a long time ago. Well, Jack has not fixed anything and he has not changed in the least. Again in 2005, Jack spoke to these groups the same groups that in the past had featured, besides others of the same ilk, anti-Jewish author/lecturer Paul Fisher. And again, after all the trouble he had caused in the past, Jack did not seek permission from anyone to do so. Jack would soon learn of the secret coup taking place and undoubtedly realized that, for his part in it, he would likely be president again and no longer held to account. For this time with the all-powerful title of Chairman of the Board of Incorporators he would report to no one.

Art Thompson Exposes Jack McManus Anti-Semitic dialog. You have already received from Wayne Rickert the [memo](#) Art Thompson wrote to me (dated October 22, 2000) outlining the possible ramifications of Jack's actions. In it Art lays out possible scenarios of repercussions from Jack's speeches. And he comments about what might happen if any of the following: Alan Stang, Joseph Maurer, Richmond Weathers, Don Julius, Marty Ohlson (Art's new re-hire), all dissidents from the past, were to link up with Morris Dees and join in on the attack.

Under Possibilities, Art Thompson lists:

McManus launches the attack.

1. Joins Maurer
2. Stays independent but goes to incorporate

(Wow! Art obviously knew of Jack's incorporators trump card a card that would later cause great harm to the Society. As you now know, it was played by three of the five incorporators fully aware of Jack's anti-Jewish remarks.)

Under the heading of What do we do? Art suggests:

Regardless of the direction, most of the below should be done ASAP.

A. Put on a video short clips of the various speeches by McManus.

1. Show how he is introduced. If by Berchman then the fact that he refers in the body of the speech that he refers to himself as *representing* The JBS. (Does this talk represent the opinion of The JBS?)

B. Transcribe same plus any written material pertinent.

C. Document the attempt to get McManus to do the right thing. (By you & T. Gow.)

1. In the process, point out the subterfuge of St. Joseph's being the first incident. It wasn't. It **has been going on for at least 3 years, at least with the anti-Semitic dialog.**

2. Point out McManus has for well over 10 years been out speaking for and to Catholic organizations as the President of The JBS with most of this info on our nickel. (It has not been uncommon that he arranges these talks while in the area while on JBS business let alone the special trips taken to do the above to private individuals at first.)

D. **Try to get McManus to resign** as a retirement move. He is already collecting social security.

There is no question what Art felt about Jack's anti-Semitic dialog. And, of course, this looking out for the Society ingratiated him with us and helped him secure an office in the Appleton headquarters. Art would later, and only Heaven knows his motivation, orchestrate a leftist-styled smear campaign against me and eventually even against the Executive Committee.

Art Thompson pulls others into a smear campaign and coup

The procedure was textbook. Art took leaders and managers aside to sow seeds of discontent. The Bush years, like the Reagan years in the 1980s, were proving very difficult for the Society. Because membership, chapter, and financial results were down considerably, there was a great deal of stress in the organization. Staff leaders in the field and in the office were expected to implement solid management principles to ensure the best results possible. And, needless to say, as the CEO, I was feeling much of that stress and was applying much of the pressure not always a real nice guy. Then, Art taking other managers aside

(office and field), was able to pull negative comments from them. He convinced several that essential management systems were really micro-management on the part of Vance. Then, when he was successful in getting some to commiserate with him, he would pass those comments along to others, especially his long-time friend Cliff Wasem.

Cliff, who two years earlier had unsuccessfully campaigned for Art for President, then apparently spent dozens of hours over several months lining up the opposition to Vance Smith with Council members and with what he referred to as senior staff. As recently as two weeks before this letter was written, Cliff was still bragging about his efforts to pull this off by lining up the opposition to Vance and the Executive Committee.

Early on, Executive Committee member Art Crino was pulled into the fray. Then Art Crino, behind the backs of his fellow Executive Committee members, retailed his allegations to all who would listen. He [admitted to field staff](#) member Bryan Turner that he had been engaged secretly in this effort since April 2005. Then, realizing that he had misspoken, he told Bryan Turner he would deny the statement he had made earlier. In other words, five months before any of this came to the attention of his fellow Executive Committee members or myself, Art Crino was working to remove us. His reward, as you well know, was to be elected by Jack and his band of incorporators as Chairman of the Board of Directors.

(We have been told that the removal of Art Crino from the Executive Committee is what convinced JBS Incorporator John Fall to allow Jack to hold his nefarious incorporators meeting on October 21st. I find myself scratching my head over this issue. Would any of you, if you were an Executive Committee member, like Wayne, Walt, or Keith, be okay about a colleague on your committee working to subvert the decisions of, and undermine confidence in, the authority of that committee? I would hope not. Would you want him removed from your committee? I would hope so.)

As with any Leftist smear campaign to topple a government, the spotlight was all on the alleged abuses and inadequacies of G. Vance Smith. I suspect there was little investigation or discussion of the inadequacies of the proposed alternatives. Mr. Welch would have been appalled, I believe, at this approach to choosing the Society's leader.

Let's look a little closer at the rewards to those who led the campaign. As mentioned, Art Crino was made Chairman of the Board, and Cliff Wasem was elevated to a now-emasculated Executive Committee. And two of Art Thompson's struggling fundraisers, both in their 70s, were promoted. One, for his part in the coup, was appointed a full vice president of fundraising, while the other, who had been reassigned because he failed earlier in the job, was again appointed as Director of Field Activities. Obviously, leadership in both the field and fundraising

departments is essential to the Society's success.

So, the question is, what are you as members of the Council going to do about these problems?

Only you can use your influence with other Council members to force Jack to resign from all leadership positions especially as a member of the JBS Board of Incorporators. He has certainly proven himself unworthy to hold that position. Only you can put pressure on Art Thompson to resign.

Only you can insist that Art Crino and Cliff Wasem be removed from the Council and any elected positions they presently hold.

And, only you can insist on what Don Fotheringham is advocating that the Executive Committee be exonerated and reinstituted exactly the way it was in mid-October 2005. Then, allow the Executive Committee, in conference with the Council members who were serving in that period of time, to hear any legitimate complaints and deal with those matters that, over the years, they've proven themselves so capable of handling.

Council members, first of all, must be good Birchers, and you are the Council members. You hold a high and important trust with the general membership. You are not window dressing as some have stated, you were appointed to be pullers at the oars and not passengers in the boat. Stand up, speak out, and do something.

It is now up to you. Even though the former leadership had kept them under wraps, the recent events have brought the views of Jack McManus relative to the Jewish religion and Masonry out in to the open. If the Society is going to move forward without this anti baggage, Jack simply must be removed from all JBS leadership positions. Doing so will once again demonstrate to the world that The John Birch Society is focused on principles and is free from any justified accusations of bigotry.

Not only the Society, our entire nation is in deep trouble. There is a very real enemy, a ruthless Conspiracy that wishes to enslave all mankind that needs to be dealt with. Plus, the extremely important campaign to stop the FTAA is being neglected, and the equally important activity to stop the North American Community has gone nowhere since October when Tom Gow and I were forced to leave. The Insiders are moving forward and they must be thrilled with what is happening and what is not happening in The John Birch Society.

It's time to check this deplorable situation and go to work! Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss the matter further.

Sincerely,
G. Vance Smith

To obtain the following support documentation please email your request to [Kathy Braun](#).

Smith letter to McManus, 7/03/02
(2) Conference flyers, 2005
Benoit and Toft letter, 8/03/00
Eisenberg letter, 7/19/00
Eisenberg letter, 7/27/00
Eisenberg letter, 8/18/00

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